Abstract

A telecommunications toll network system employs a central database computer to provide routing and calling rate instructions to toll switches. To allow sponsors of pay services, such as 900 number information services, to control the kinds of calls they receive and the rates charged, the central database computer employs routing plans. These routing plans contain conditional branches which are selected based on data provided in a query from the originating toll switch (OTS) and sent to the database computer via common channel signaling (CCS). According to the invention, sponsors can insert objects in their routing plans to override the default rate to be applied to the call. These objects are called rate nodes. Rate nodes are non-branching elements inserted in a routing plan that specify a rate to be used for billing. The rate is specified on the automated message accounting (AMA) record and used by a billing platform to generate bills to the callers. Another type of object, test nodes are branching elements inserted in routing plans. Test nodes define branches in the routing plan which are responsive to data indicative of an initial route from the caller to the OTS such as the ANI or NPA (the area code or originating LEC. Since the routes and rating are determined by a program in response to a single query from the OTS, the call is handled quickly. Additionally, smaller service providers without the ability to set up communications between their own facility (which might be simply a plain old telephone system; POTS) are able to make use of the control features provided.